

What is claimed is:

1. An article of footwear comprising, in combination:
an upper;
a sole structure secured to the upper and comprising:
an outsole secured to the upper;
a plurality of gripping elements extending outwardly from the outsole;
a heel plate extending downwardly and rearwardly from a midfoot portion of the outsole;
a first support column extending between the outsole and the heel plate, the first column positioned in a lateral portion of a heel portion of the outsole;
a second support column extending between the outsole and the heel plate, the second column positioned in a medial portion of the heel portion of the outsole.
2. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the second support column is positioned forwardly of the first support column.
3. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein a diameter of the first support column is larger than a diameter of the second support column.
4. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the gripping elements include a plurality of spikes.
5. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the gripping elements include a plurality of projections.

6. The article of footwear of claim 5, wherein the projections are pyramids.
7. The article of footwear of claim 6, wherein the pyramids have triangular bases.
8. The article of footwear of claim 7, wherein the triangular bases are triangles, with an apex of the triangle having an acute angle and pointing generally toward a front of the outsole.
9. The article of footwear of claim 5, wherein some of the projections are positioned beneath the support elements and have a conical shape.
10. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the heel plate extends to a point beneath a rear portion of a heel portion of the outsole.
11. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the heel plate is formed of a polymer.
12. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the outsole is formed of a polymer.
13. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the heel plate is of unitary construction with the outsole.
14. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein each support column includes a central void.
15. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein an exterior surface of each support column includes a circumferential rib.

16. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein each support column is formed of one of rubber, polyurethane foam, microcellular elastomeric foams, or EVA foam.
17. The article of footwear of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of ribs, each rib extending beneath a point at which the heel plate joins the outsole.
18. The article of footwear of claim 16, wherein each rib has a first end located at a rear portion of a forefoot portion of the outsole and a second end located at a midfoot portion of the heel plate.
19. An article of footwear comprising, in combination:
 - an upper; and
 - a sole structure secured to the upper and comprising:
 - an outsole secured to the upper;
 - a plurality of spikes extending outwardly from the outsole;
 - a plurality of projections extending outwardly from the outsole;
 - a heel plate extending downwardly and rearwardly from a midfoot portion of the outsole to a point below a heel portion of the outsole;
 - a plurality of projections extending outwardly from the heel plate;
 - a first support column extending between the outsole and the heel plate, the first column positioned in a lateral portion of the heel portion of the outsole; and
 - a second support column extending between the outsole and the heel plate, the second column positioned in a medial portion of the heel portion of the outsole and forwardly of the first support column.

20. The article of footwear of claim 19, further comprising a plurality of ribs, each rib extending beneath a point at which the heel plate joins the outsole.
21. The article of footwear of claim 20, wherein each rib has a first end located at a rear portion of a forefoot portion of the outsole and a second end located at a midfoot portion of the heel plate.
22. An article of footwear comprising, in combination:
an upper; and
a sole structure secured to the upper and comprising:
a midsole secured to the upper;
an insole positioned within the upper above the midsole;
an outsole secured to the midsole;
a plurality of spikes extending outwardly from the outsole;
a plurality of projections extending outwardly from the outsole;
a heel plate extending downwardly and rearwardly from a midfoot portion of the outsole to a point below a heel portion of the outsole;
a plurality of projections extending outwardly from the heel plate;
a first support column extending between the outsole and the heel plate, the first column positioned in a lateral portion of the heel portion of the outsole; and
a second support column extending between the outsole and the heel plate, the second column positioned in a medial portion of the heel portion of the outsole and forwardly of the first support column.